

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 28, 2018
To: Planning and Development Committee
From: Lyle Wray, Executive Director, CRCOG
Direct telephone: 860 724 4232
Subject: Municipal Shared Services & Regional Efficiencies

Please accept our memo as a follow up to your shared services hearing of February 27. We offer three elements for your consideration: background and introduction, and CRCOG services summary and legislative recommendations for this session.

1. Background and Introduction

CRCOG has a long history of municipal shared services and leveraging regional efficiencies. At the end of this memo is a summary of the shared services CRCOG currently provides its members and municipalities across Connecticut.

We hope that CRCOG's history and experience in regional collaboration and municipal shared services is already well known to this committee.

Here are some regional projects that CRCOG will be working on in the coming months and years that should be of interest to the Planning and Development Committee.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Assist the 38 towns of the capital region in formulating an economic growth strategy.

Finalize Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) with five to ten game-changers and opportunities within the region (http://crcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017CEDS_RFP-crcog.pdf)

Undertake an after action memo for the Amazon HQ 2 second round choices identifying opportunities for the region

Continue to advance Regional Futures Initiative and build on the CEDS to implement at least two of the game-changers identified in the CEDS.

Planning and Sustainable Transportation Options. Advance sustainable planning and transportation options that support the region

Continue work on “green” opportunities including: Green Clearinghouse, Brownfields inventory, assessment, regional loan fund and other grants, and Hazard Mitigation Planning

Continue work on “connected” opportunities: support for TOD, CTfastrak, Rail, and the Corridor Advisory Committee, Anchor Institutions Study and the Complete Streets Grant, and Regional Geographic Information Systems.

Finalize corridor studies including Route 5, Silver Lane, Comprehensive Transit Analysis, UCONN Eastern Gateways Study, and UCONN Farmington / Hartford;

Continue Core MPO planning, congestion management, transit planning, bicycle/pedestrian planning and LOTCIP Administration.

Finalize Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Partner with Towns for More Effective and Efficient Services. Assist towns in being more efficient and effective in the delivery of services

Continue advancing existing programs in Homeland Security and Public Safety including: CAPTAIN program, Homeland Security Grant Programs, Metropolitan Medical Response System, Citizen Corps, Department of Public Health emergency preparedness, and Support of Regional Teams (SWAT, Dive team, Bomb Squad, HAZMAT, etc.).

Continue advancing other Shared Services Programs: CRCOG Regional Purchasing Council, including annual and biennial bids, energy Consortium (Electricity, Natural Gas), and the Indefinite Quantity Construction Program (ezIQC); the IT Services Cooperative which includes VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol), Fiber Infrastructure, General IT Services, and Hosting / Disaster Recovery; the Crumbling Foundations Testing Program; Nutmeg Network Demonstration Projects which include Electronic Document Management and HR-Portal; and support of the Regional Solid Waste.

Create a template for regional solution for 911 and regional prison holding, including a cost benefit analysis

Advance opportunities for small towns “Human Capital” sharing in at least one or more of the following areas: Human Resources, Tax Assessor or Building Official.

2. CRCOG Services Summary

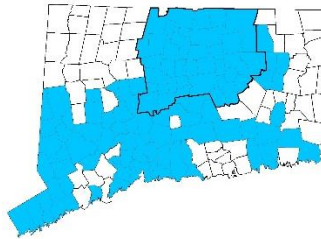
The following is an overview of the many services CRCOG provides member municipalities and other towns across Connecticut. It’s important to note that this is not a comprehensive list of all services that CRCOG provides its members and other towns but an overview of the various services.

Map of Current CRCOG Programs and Projects

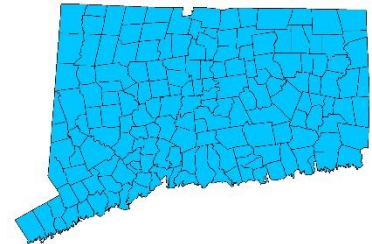
Many of CRCOG's programs, projects and initiatives cross boundaries of the nine Council of Government regions as illustrated in the maps below.



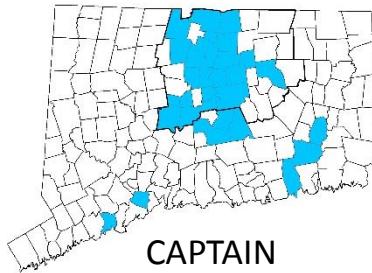
CRCOG Boundaries



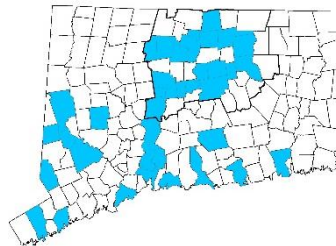
Purchasing Council



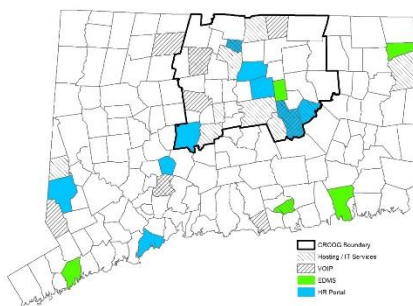
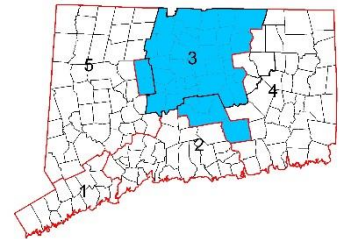
GIS Flight



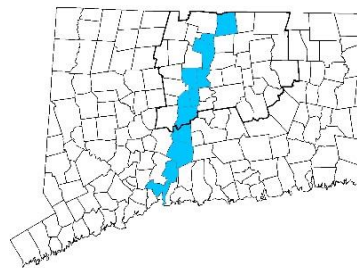
CAPTAIN



Regional Online Permitting



Nutmeg Network Project Towns



Corridor Advisory Committee

Capitol Region Purchasing Council. It now has more than 100 local government agencies as members. Its major areas of responsibility include Annual/Biennial cooperative bids, the CRCOG Natural Gas Consortium, the CRCOG Electricity Consortium, Indefinite Quantity Construction Program, and our e-Procurement software. The Purchasing Council Executive Committee hosts an Annual Meeting of the groups' membership. Staff also continuously review the programming offered through the Council and explore new areas of service.

CRCOG IT Services Cooperative: pursues regional software and other IT solutions for municipalities looking to save tax dollars and enhance operating efficiencies. This group has successfully supported the establishment of a commonsense, affordable fiber network for municipalities, which will enable the next generation of service sharing to gain local operating efficiencies. All municipalities in Connecticut now have the opportunity to be connected to the Nutmeg Network. More service sharing opportunities are now possible as a result of this network connectivity and the establishment of the CRCOG Data Center that provides a wide array of IT hosting and software sharing to municipalities. Current programs include: Fiber Infrastructure (SERTEX), General IT Services (CCAT), Hosting/Disaster Recovery, Voice over Internet Protocol, Regional Online Permitting Program, CRCOG Data Center to house cooperative licenses and provide hosting services. Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) is currently in pilot.

CAPTAIN, Public Safety and Homeland Security: CRCOG's Public Safety and Homeland Security Department coordinates and assists the efforts of 41 DEHMS Region 3 towns to plan for, access state and federal funding for, and develop and implement projects that will improve the region's safety and security. Major areas of responsibility include administration of the statewide CAPTAIN mobile data communication system and project management and oversight of federal grant funds in the following categories: State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), and Citizen Corps programs (CCP). Other programs include equipment purchases and training coordination for regional teams including 9 SWAT, Hartford Bomb Squad, HAZMAT, Regional Incident Dispatch, Regional Command Post and Regional Dive Team.

Regional Geographic Information Service (GIS): Maintenance and enhancement of CRCOG GIS system, and provision of advanced mapping and analysis services for member municipalities and all CRCOG departments. Coordination of statewide orthographic and LIDAR flight and distribution of the data.

Human Resources Portal (nutmeghr.org): The HR-Portal houses model documents (job descriptions, job application, and employee handbook), training videos regarding various HR related municipal issues, and examples from municipalities of various documents. CRCOG staff coordinated and managed the creation of an electronic version of the annual CCM Salary Survey. Electronic Personnel File Management is currently in pilot.

CRCOG Foundation: Established in 2005, the CRCOG Foundation, Inc. was created to support the broad range of planning and direct service activities carried out locally by Capitol Region municipalities and regionally by CRCOG. The Foundation is dedicated to advancing policies and programs in four strategic areas—Transportation, Community Development, Public Safety and Municipal Services—and serves three key roles: as an educator, a convener and a funder. Recent projects have included: launching a listening tour in support of a proposed Regional Futures Initiative; sponsoring an ongoing workshop series on Next Generation Economic Development; initiating a video testimonial project in partnership with the University of Hartford; providing fiduciary and administrative services for a Rebooting New England Economic Development Strategy; and coordinating with Metro Hartford Progress Points partners to identify opportunities for moving from informing to impact.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: CRCOG is developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region in partnership with a number of organizations. For this strategy CRCOG will be working with a consultant to do a clear-eyed situational assessment of the region's strengths and weaknesses in order to identify the opportunities that we should be pursuing. The process will result in the development of a strategy focused on a limited number of "game changer" strategies to move the region forward in an equitable way. We will also be undertaking an assessment of the region's current capacities, as well as the capacities that will be necessary to implement the strategic plan and sustain it over time. The plan will fulfill requirements of the federal Economic Development Administration, but will also provide a strategic framework for a Regional Futures Initiative going forward.

Regional Planning and Policy Development: related to building livable and sustainable communities. This program area integrates CRCOG's planning and investment in the areas of: housing, transportation, environmental protection, land use, economic development, redevelopment, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. It also touches on all aspects of the connected, competitive, vibrant and green vision for the New England's Knowledge Corridor and the Capitol Region. This work includes follow-up activities related to the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Action Agenda, and continuation of the Sustainable Capitol Region Initiative.

Transportation Planning: responsible for defining the region's long-term vision for transportation, developing a strategic plan to achieve that vision, and programming projects that implement the plan. As a federally designated Metropolitan Planning

Organization (MPO), provide local elected officials with a voice in the decision-making process regarding how federal transportation funds are invested. For many projects CRCOG integrates land use and transportation planning. Program areas include transportation planning and policy development, transit planning, bicycle and pedestrian planning and promotion, freight planning, project financing and programming, system management and operations planning, including congestion management, safety management, incident management and emergency management, regional travel forecast model among others.

Other Projects: CRCOG administers the Crumbling Foundations Testing Program and staffs and is an integral member of the Ad-Hoc Working Committee on Crumbling Foundations. CRCOG also staffs the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA) which works on solid waste issues on behalf of the CCSWA member towns.

3. 2018 Legislative Recommendations

Legislatively, CRCOG recommends the following to increase regional opportunities and enhance regionalism throughout the state:

Expand Shared Services Offerings. Support expanding shared services such as:

Technology and services based on the Nutmeg Cloud IT/software

Police, Fire, and EMS communications including conducting a regional PSAP study for operations and funding (including governance, equipment needs)

Reinstate the Regional Performance Incentive program

Use COG boundaries as framework for other district services such as workforce development and human services delivery

Receiving a fair share of national Homeland Security funds

Stable Funding for Councils of Governments. To be vibrant and effective, Councils of Government need long-term stability in funding. A direct, reliable source of funding, not dependent on either the State or municipalities, is needed.

COGs as Counties for Purposes of Federal Funding. Secure State approvals necessary for federal declaration Councils of Governments shall be considered counties for the purpose of receiving federal grants.

Codify Council of Government Roles. Codify roles in water and solid waste planning in state law.

Regional Asset Districts. Create Regional Asset Districts to promote regional recreational and cultural facilities funded through food and beverage taxes and local

property taxes. Funds to be distributed by COGs for infrastructure improvements for these facilities.

School Town Service Integration. Require closer collaboration or integration of school and town administrative functions to reduce duplication costs.

Expand Nutmeg Network. Support expansion of Nutmeg Network to additional towns, libraries and schools in the region.

Advance Digital Equity. Address digital equity issues by requiring Internet providers to provide low-cost service to households with the free or reduced lunch program.

Accelerate the State use of strategic IT. Require each state agency to develop a Strategic IT Plan and develop a common grant portal, one-door access for Human Services.